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KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

SUCCESS STORY

Hospital Becomes Baby-Friendly

USAID project helps a hospital in Kyrgyzstan achieve international standards in mother and child care.

The Maternity Ward at the Leylek Territorial Hospital in Batken Oblast, southern Kyrgyzstan is one of the few maternity wards in the country that has received the UNICEF/WHO certification of the Baby-Friendly hospital. Baby-Friendly certification promotes an international standard of care by which health providers and maternity infrastructure actively support 10 clear steps to ensuring the birthing process be natural, safe, and in the best interest for the mother and her child.



Sohiba with her baby at the Leylek Hospital.
Photo: Project HOPE

Baby-Friendly certification was achieved together with the USAID and Project HOPE Healthy Family project. The project worked with the hospital to introduce such steps as immediate and exclusive breastfeeding on demand, partner participation in the delivery room, and a friendly and more client-centered approach to the labor and delivery period.

Women who have given birth at Leylek maternity house in the past have noticed changes for the better: newborns are kept with their mothers immediately after delivery and breastfed on demand, doctors and nurses are kind and attentive. New mothers receive training and a brochure on breastfeeding. A telephone hotline provides information about breastfeeding.

Sohiba Sultanibraimova, who delivered her baby at Leylek Territorial Hospital, says: "After I gave birth to my elder son in 2003, my breasts got swollen during the first days after delivery.

Breastfeeding turned into a painful process. The doctors advised me to massage my breasts, but it got even worse. I had to start giving commercial formula to my baby, and that was difficult. I had to wake up at night and prepare the formula, my baby was weak and sickly, and the formula was expensive. Five months after the birth of my first child I became pregnant again. Now I have two sons, but much fewer problems. My doctors taught me how I should breastfeed and take care of my child. My husband told me that at one of the Friday prayers, the imam of the mosque made a speech about the benefits of breastfeeding, which is mentioned in Qur'an. Now, I have no doubt that I am capable of breastfeeding my baby correctly and both of us will be healthy".

"Now, I have no doubt that I am capable of breastfeeding my baby correctly, and both of us will be healthy,"

- Sohiba Sultanibraimova, who gave birth to her son at the Leylek Hospital.

Through 2007, the USAID and Project HOPE Healthy Family project worked with over two million people in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to improve maternal and child health.